



The Vine Awards Shortlist: Unafraid. Powerful. Honest.

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is proud to announce the shortlist for the 2017 [Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature](#). Winners will be announced on 3rd October at an Award Luncheon at the Park Hyatt Hotel, Toronto.

The Vine Awards honour both the best Canadian Jewish writers and Canadian authors who deal with Jewish subjects in four categories; fiction, non-fiction, history and young adult/children’s literature; each with a prize of \$10,000. An additional \$10,000 prize for poetry will be awarded again in 2019. The Jury, Ami Sands Brodoff, Bob Bossin, and Cary Fagan selected the shortlist from the 58 submissions accepted this year.

From the 2016 acceptance speech of Emil Sher, author of *Young Man with Camera*: “One of the joys of Judaism is how we are encouraged to wrestle with ideas, to debate and discuss, to affirm that there are no easy answers and that questions are intrinsically valuable. One of the concepts of Judaism is tikkun olam, to repair the world. We live in a fragile, fractured world that is in constant need of healing, and literature has always been a singular balm that can help restore our broken selves, redress wrongs that leave deep ruptures, and reimagine what

we may yet become. Satire, screenplays, non-fiction, poetry, and prose: they are all inroads into a world that needs to be turned inside out, taken apart and slowly put back together again, word by word, line by line, page by page.”

“**The Vine Awards** this year shares this theme of literary empathy and activism that is honest, unafraid, sometimes humorous, always powerful, and presented in a variety of formats for today’s readers. It’s a remarkable list!” says Cathy Jonasson, Executive Director of the Koffler Centre of the Arts.

Fiction:

***School of Velocity* - Eric Beck Rubin (Doubleday Canada)**

Elegant and lyrical prose that both hides and reveals the unquiet mind of its protagonist, a highly thoughtful and emotionally devastating first novel – The Jury

***Carry Me* - Peter Behrens (House of Anansi Press)**

Behrens is a master, at home in the broad sweep of history and the intimate detail of a character’s experience. This is a novel that could be, should be, read in a hundred years – The Jury

***For All the Men (and Some of the Women) I’ve Known* - Danila Botha (Tightrope Books)**

Sharp, contemporary tales about urban twenty-somethings lost in sex, drugs, and rock and roll - The Jury

Non-Fiction:

***Closer: Notes from the Orgasmic Frontier of Female Sexuality* - Sarah Barmak (Coach House Books)**

A taut exploration of how women are reshaping and defining their own sexuality - The Jury

***White Walls* - Judy Batalion (Berkley)**

A warm, witty memoir about a crazy Jewish family and the messy bonds between mothers and daughters – The Jury

***Chasing Utopia* - David Leach (ECW Press)**

An entertaining, enlightening portrait of the controversial decline of Israel’s Kibbutz movement and the renaissance of the original vision, engrossing, comic, and nuanced – The Jury

***Toward a Hot Jew* - Miriam Libicki (Fantagraphics Books Inc.)**

An admirably complicated response to being a woman and a Jew in our time, a thrilling combination of memoir, journalism, and art - The Jury

History:

***By Chance Alone* - Max Eisen (Harper Collins Publishers)**

A vital, irreplaceable, and timely memoir about survival at Auschwitz, deeply moving and beautifully written – The Jury

***Pumpkin Flowers* - Matti Friedman (McClelland & Stewart)**

Matti Friedman's powerful writing raises this work of history and journalism to the level of art – The Jury

***A Future Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada* - Ester Reiter (Between the Lines)**

A generous portrait of people whose own struggles were so often superseded by a vision of the common good - The Jury

Children's/Young Adult:

***Feathered* - Deborah Kerbel (Kids Can Press)**

A magical, richly imagined story about the meaning of friendship – The Jury

***Irena's Children* - Tilar Mazzeo and Mary Farrell (Margaret K. McElderry Books)**

The extraordinary, little known story of Irena Sendler who saved 2,500 Jewish children; deftly adapted for young readers, drama and momentum of a thriller – The Jury

***Seeking Refuge* - Irene N. Watts and Kathryn E. Shoemaker (Tradewind Books)**

A superb graphic novel dramatizing the Kindertransport, a powerful story enhanced by first-hand experience and beautiful black-and-white illustrations - The Jury

The **Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature** is made possible by a generous donation by the **Lillian and Norman Glowinsky Family Foundation** to support Canadian Jewish literature, a tradition they established with the original awards in 2004, building on the Canadian Jewish Book Awards founded in 1988 by Adam Fuerstenberg. The Vine Awards are a loving tribute to Lillian's parents – Helen and Stan Vine – who were passionate about the arts and the Jewish community throughout their lives.

The **Koffler Centre of the Arts** is a cultural platform that explores critical ideas and concerns of our time through exhibitions, publications, performances, conversations and digital initiatives. We examine complex issues in respectful, constructive discussions that position our Jewish identity in conversation with diverse perspectives and global voices. The Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the Koffler Family Foundation, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the Ontario Arts Council through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, The National Post (Media Partner for the Vine Awards), and our patrons and donors.